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Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 12458 211045Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 USSS-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
---------- 078451 /17
R 210957Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2082
INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 12458

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CASC (HUBERMAN, MARY)
SUBJ: WEST GERMAN CONFIRMS AMCIT KIDNAPPING AND RELEASE

REF: A) ADDIS ABABA 12028, B) ADDIS ABABA 12037,
C) ADDIS ABABA 12247, D) ADDIS ABABA 12302,
E) ADDIS ABABA 12397

1. EMBASSY OFFICER AND OFFICER OF BRITISH EMBASSY HAD OPPORTUNITY ON MORNING OF DEC 18 TO TALK WITH GUNTHER WEBER, 22-YEAR -OLD WEST GERMAN WHO WAS ONE OF THREE FOREIGNERS REPORTED KIDNAPPED BY ETHIOPIANS PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (EPRP) IN SIMIEN GAME PARK ON NOV 25 (REFTEL A). THE OTHER TWO WERE MARY HUBERMAN,U.S. CITIZEN, AND IAN KEIGHTLEY, AUSTRALIAN (REFTEL D).

2. WEBER CONFIRMED THE CAPTURE OF THE THREE BY THE EPRA (ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY ARMY, MILITARY WING OF THE EPRP). THEY WERE RELEASED UNHARMED AFTER BEING HELD FOR TWO DAYS AND TOLD THEY WERE WELCOME TO STAY ON AT THE GAME PARK, AND WOULD NOT BE BOTHERED AGAIN BY THE KIDNAPPERS.

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PAGE 02 ADDIS 12458 211045Z

3. WEBER SAID THAT THEY ALL (THE THREE FOREIGNERS AND FOUR ETHIOPIAN EMPLOYEES OF THE GAME PARK WHO WERE ALSO TAKEN) WERE TREATED WELL DURING THEIR DETENTION. THEY WERE PROPAGANDIZED BY THEIR CAPTORS (ABOUT 40 ARMED MEN, ALL OF WHOM SPOKE ENGLISH AND SEEMED WELL EDUCATED) AND ENCOURAGED TO SPEAK WELL OF THEIR

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT FOLLOWING THEIR RELEASE. THEY
WERE RELEASED EARLY IN THE AFTERNOON OF NOV 27, WITH
ALL THEIR POSSESSIONS. THEY HAD A FOUR-HOUR HIKE BACK
TO THE CAMP WHERE THEY HAD BEEN CAPTURED.

4. WEBER WAS TRAVELING ALONE WHEN HE ARRIVED AT THE
GAME PARK WHERE HUBERMAN AND KEIGHTLEY ALREADY STAYING.
HE SAID THAT HUBERMAN IS ABOUT 23-24 YEARS OLD, AND
HAD BEEN PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER IN ZAIRE BEFORE BEGINNING
AFRICAN TRAVELS. WEVER LEFT THE PARK ON DEC 7. HE
SAID HE THOUGHT HUBERMAN THEN PLANNED TO VISIT CHURCHES
AT LALIBELA BEFORE RETURNING TO ADDIS ABABA TO PICK
UP SOME PERSONAL POSSESSIONS SHE HAS LEFT HERE.
(N.B. BRITISH CONSUL TOLD US AUTHORITIES IN GONDAR
REPORTED TO HIM DURING HIS VISIT THERE DEC 16-18
THAT HUBERMAN AND KEIGHTLEY HAD INDEED LEFT
THE PARK ON MULES FOR LALIBELA.)

5. WEBER ALSO TOLD US HE HAS BEEN SENDING REPORTS OF
HIS TRAVELS TO HIS BROTHER IN THE FRG WHO WILL ATTEMPT
TO HAVE THEM PUBLISHED . HIS REPORTS ALREADY INCLUDE
KIDNAPPING INCIDENT. STORY MAY THEREFORE APPEAR IN
GERMAN PRESS.

6. WE WILL CONTINUE TO TRY AND CONTACT MISS HUBERMAN
TO ENSURE THAT WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK WITH
HER BEFORE SHE LEAVES THE COUNTRY.
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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